NATIONAL
ENQUIRER
LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY WEEKLY PAPER IN AMERICA
NOVEMBER 10, 1968

National Enquirer
king
10 November 1968

EXCLUSIVE

Martin Luther King's Accused Assassin Talks

In an exclusive news beat, a team of ENQUIRER reporters has obtained a report of conversations between James Earl Ray, awaiting trial as the accused killer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Shelby County authorities in Memphis, Tenn.

Here, in his own words, Ray tells of his whereabouts the day of the murder, why he fled the country to London and his belief about who killed Dr. King. He insists he is innocent and was framed by the real killers.

By MICHAEL WOODRUFF

James Earl Ray, held in Memphis, Tenn., as the accused assassin of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. last April 4, says he was framed.

Ray, whose trial is scheduled for November 12, says he wasn't even in Memphis when Dr. King was shot to death — that his fingerprints were planted on the murder rifle before the shooting. He said it must have been done by someone who knew him and wanted to cover the trail of the real killer.

Dr. King was slain by militant plotters among his own civil rights followers, Ray told Shelby County authorities in Memphis.

In a report that was obtained exclusively by The ENQUIRER, the questions and answers went this way:

Q. Were you in Memphis during the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.? A. No. I left the day before and rode to Atlanta with a friend.

Q. Did you ever own the white Mustang in which police say you fled Memphis on the night of the King murder? A. No.

Q. Whom did you come to Memphis with — and when? A. I came to Memphis about a week before the shooting. I am not going to say who I came with.

Q. You didn't kill King? A. No. I had enough heat on me from the prison break. I sure wouldn't have put more heat on myself by killing someone. (Editor's note: Ray escaped in April 1967, from Missouri State Penitentiary, where he was serving 20 years for robbing a market in 1959. He has spent 14 of his 40 years behind bars.)

Q. Did you and your group (Editor's note: His partners in crime) ever discuss King's activities? A. No. All we talked about was how I could flee the country and avoid being captured by Missouri authorities. (He was arrested in London last June.)

Q. Do you have any idea who killed King? A. Yes. I believe the murder was committed by a group of conspirators within King's own civil rights movement who killed him because they disagreed with his non-violent tactics.

Q. You and your attorney (Arthur J. Hanes Sr., former mayor of Birmingham, Ala.) disagree on this theory, don't you? A. Yes. Mr. Hanes believes the murder was executed by a giant communist conspiracy.

Q. How do you account for your fingerprints being on the murder weapon? A. They were planted on the rifle by someone before the shooting.

Q. Who planted them there? A. I have a good idea but I am not saying at this time.

Q. Did you ever own a rifle similar to the one found at the scene of the slaying? A. No.

Q. Where did you get the money to live on and travel about the country? A. As you know, I'm no saint. Let's just say I managed to get by.

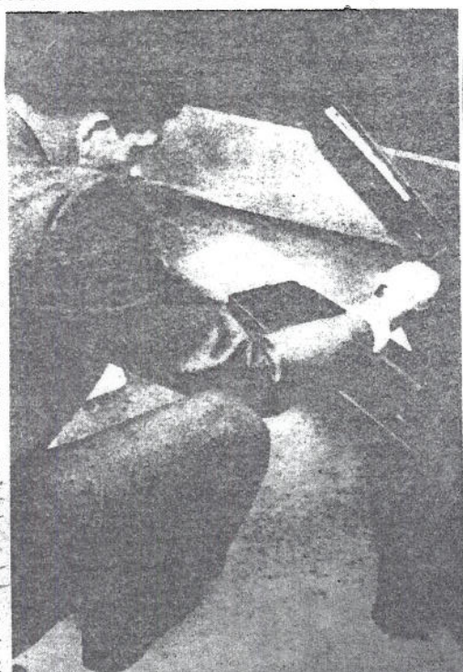
Q. Did anyone in your group give you money? A. Yes. We all worked together and helped one another.

Q. Why did you use the names Eric Starvo Galt and Roman George Sneyd? A. They were suggested by some of my friends who had used the names themselves from time to time.

Q. Do you hate Negroes? A. No, but I don't want to live with them.

Q. What did you think of Martin Luther King? A. I have never really given this any thought. He wasn't that important to me.

Q. Do you believe anyone in your group was connected with the King assassination? A. They wouldn't have had to be for me to be chosen for such a task.



DOCTORED EVIDENCE?: Ray claims his fingerprints were planted on murder gun, shown here being carefully packed into case by police officer shortly after the shooting.

ARTHUR HANES
Ray's defense lawyer

Ray is held under maximum security at Shelby County Jail in Memphis, where a block of four cells on the third floor was vacated and strengthened for his imprisonment. He is under 24-hour watch by guards in the corridor and by closed-circuit television.

Lights shine and his guards are ordered never to leave his cell at night.

Steel plates were attached to the cell bars [illegible]

Sandbags are piled around his cell and in the corridor as a precaution against attack with an explosive by someone who might slip by the guards.

Officials are determined to safeguard Ray from fanatics who might kill him and prevent his being brought to trial.

Ray eats the same food as other prisoners. It is delivered to him in a boy and guards watch as he uses knife and fork.

The guards carry no firearms, only a Mace-type spray.

For recreation Ray gets magazines and books. He plays cards and dominoes through the cell bars with guards.

The stakes in the games are matchsticks.

There is a television set at one end of the corridor for the guards and Ray can see it from his cell.

Ray is a neat dresser in fatigues, and he keeps his hair combed and shaves regularly.

Ray has been out of the cell only twice since he was flown from London last July 19.

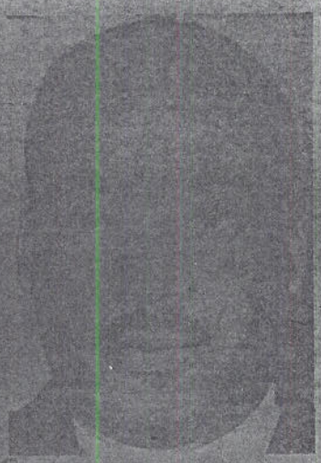
Once was for his court arrangement on July 22.

The second time was on September 30 when he asked for a court order to relax the security, especially the burning of lights at night.

Judge W. Preston Battle denied the request, recommending that Ray get a black mask to cover his eyes if he had trouble sleeping.

Ray's only visitors have been lawyers.

His attorney, Hanes, said: "James Earl Ray has fallen victim to a giant conspiracy."



VICTIM: Dr. Martin Luther King, civil rights leader, slain by rifleman in Memphis last April.